

Legislative Hearing
Public Health Committee SB 401
An Initiative to Increase and Improve the State's Health Care Workforce
Dr. Lawrence Singer

Senator Harris, Representative Ritter, members of the Public Health Committee,

I am Dr. Lawrence Singer, a practicing dentist from Wallingford. I have practiced there for forty six years. I am a member of the Connecticut State Dental Association, having served as its President a very long time ago. I am a member of the CSDA's Council on Legislation and Chairman of the CSDA's Taskforce on Dental Issues for Seniors. I would like to speak in support of SB 401, as I believe this Bill would bring forth issues that can only benefit the citizens of the State.

While the Bill is complex, it points us in the directions that must be taken, and identifies issues to be addressed if the future health care needs of the Connecticut public are adequately met. Given the current fiscal environment it is doubtful that many of the Bill's proposals could be put into action any time soon, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't assemble a taskforce of stakeholders to study the preliminaries.

I can assure the members of the Public Health Committee that the Connecticut State Dental Association and its membership will dedicate its efforts to ensure a positive result should this Bill become law. As an Association, we have been studying the Access to Care issue for many years. We have gathered information regarding the establishment of educational facilities whose purpose it is to provide a learning environment for persons who wish to dedicate their lives to providing health care services in a professional manner. And this being done while conforming to existing regulatory statutes regarding the qualifications required by the individual practitioner. Educational opportunities abound for health care providers, some of whom would like to climb an appropriate career ladder. Entry level opportunities should be identified and made available as well.

SB 401 requires an intense and ongoing educational and communications process so as to alert the public to the concerns of the legislature in the area of Workforce Issues, as well as identifying the resources that must be in place if the whole process is to achieve success.

During a Public Hearing before this Committee last year, I responded to a question from Senator Harris. He asked, "What was I", I assume he was referring to the dental profession in the state, not me as an individual, "suggesting be done to resolve one particular facet of the Access to Care issue, expanding dental auxiliary's functions"? I responded with an offer, "To sit down with the stake holders involved, along with the communities of interest in a collaborative fashion". I believe that the Connecticut State Dental Association leadership and its members would concur with my response.

While it would be presumptive for me to volunteer the services for anybody other than myself, I wish to renew my personal offer.

I believe SB 401 to be a step in that direction, and I would support its intent and passage

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